

## Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis)

Eczema (Atopic Dermatitis) is a chronic inflammatory disease of the skin. The cause of the disease is usually unknown. It usually has an onset in childhood but can occur at any age. Symptoms include severe itching and a red skin rash. When it is scratched, the rash becomes raw and weepy. The itching is usually intermittent during the day and worse in the early evening and during the night. Patients usually suffer from dry skin.

### General Skin Care

- Avoid things that cause flare-ups
- Reduce stress (stress causes increased scratching)
- Keep nails trimmed short to decrease irritation from scratching
- Cover hands while you are sleeping to avoid scratching
- Talk with your doctor regarding medications to prevent or alleviate symptoms
- Avoid irritants such as soaps, detergents, chemicals, extreme changes in temperature
- Avoid allergens that cause symptoms

### Weather Care

- Avoid sports in which there is a lot of physical contact and a lot of perspiration
- Be sure to shower immediately after swimming and apply a skin lubricant
- Avoid excessive heat
- Use air conditioning when it's hot outside
- Avoid sunscreens containing irritating ingredients
- Remember that sometimes sun exposure can be beneficial but that sweating can cause itching
- Don't let yourself get sunburned
- Avoid excessive cold conditions

### Bathing Care

- Do not use any abrasives on skin during bathing
- Avoid astringents and alcohol containing skin products
- No bubble bath
- Use a non-drying soap on armpits, genital area, and feet. On other areas, water should be sufficient.
- Do not scrub skin with anything more abrasive than a damp washcloth

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- Be sure not to bathe too frequently
- When bathing use tepid vs. hot water and do not bathe longer than 5 or 10 minutes
- Do not use shampoo on areas with eczema
- Hydrate your skin but be careful to avoid skin care products containing perfumes and dyes.

## Clothing and Laundry Care

- Use liquid not powdered laundry detergent
- Wash new clothes before wearing them
- Avoid fabric softeners
- Add a second rinse cycle to your laundry
- Avoid irritating fabrics (nylon, wool)
- Wear soft cotton or cotton blend clothing next to skin, loose-fitting open weave garments

## If prescribed topical steroids

- Apply after bathing in tepid water
- Apply before using non-medicated emollients (Keri, Lubriderm)
- Only apply too inflamed areas do no apply to areas that are dry but not inflamed
- Do not cover with dressings

**Call us immediately if rash appears infected and your child has a fever, or if the rash flares up after contact with someone with fever blisters.**